

Slave Collection

PC.1629

Finding aid prepared by Fran Tracy-Walls

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

State Archives of North Carolina
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Summary Information

Repository State Archives of North Carolina

Title Slave Collection

Date [inclusive] 1748-1922

Extent 2.0 boxes

Language English

Language of Materials note English

This is a collection created over time by the State Archives's staff, consisting of original and photocopied documents relating to slavery in North Carolina, as late as 1862.

Consists of original items such as bills of sales, deeds of gift, account of hire of slaves, and also photocopied items (with some enclosures), including bills of sale, deed of emancipation, commitment, court papers, petitions, certification, claims, letters, depositions, and slave births. Includes a manuscript letter of 2 February 1843 written by a friend of John Brown, Augustus Wattles of Ohio (abolitionist and educator), to William Smith, Michigan, alias for David, a fugitive slave who had belonged to Presley Nelms of Anson County, North Carolina. Additionally, there are three copies of published accounts, each recollections of slavery days.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item] in PC.1629, Slave Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C. U.S.A.

Biographical/Historical note

Slaves were imported into North Carolina as early as 1694. From around 1790, free blacks and slaves constituted about twenty-five percent of the population of the state. In 1790 white slaveholders represented 31 percent of the population and 27.7 percent in 1860. Of these slaveholders, two percent owned more than 50 slaves, three percent owned twenty or more slaves, while the majority of slaveholders (70.8 percent) owned fewer than 10 slaves. When the Civil War ended in 1865, North Carolina had more than 360,000 newly emancipated African Americans. [See *Encyclopedia of North Carolina History*, ed. William S. Powerll (UNC Press, Chapel Hill, 2006), entry on slavery by Jeffrey J. Crow, et al.]

By 1860 virtually every county in existence in North Carolina had a body of documents that are referred to as "slave papers." These papers were usually accumulated by the clerk of court or by the register of deeds and they include all or part of the following: bills of sale of slaves; criminal and civil cases relating to slaves on such matters as the possession or ownership of particular slaves; petitions to sell slaves; returns from the sale of freedmen of color; and various other types of records involving slaves, who by the laws of that era were treated as property. The papers in the Private Collection Slave Papers represent an attempt to supplement, as is possible, the papers in the county public records. Note that some of the counties papers have not survived due to court house fires, and other losses, and some are still held within certain counties. [See additional information in an Archives Information Circular, in the Search Room of the State Archives of North Carolina: " Preliminary Guide to Records Relating to African Americans" in the North Carolina State Archives. Number 17 1980 TWM (Revised 2002 ELI).]

Scope and Contents note

Consists of thirteen original items such as bills of sales, deeds of gift, "permission" to marry, an account of the hire of slaves of a deceased owner. There are also photocopied items (with some enclosures), in folders number 10 to 30 (exception in folder 28), including bills of sale, deed of emancipation, commitment, court papers, petitions, certification, claims, letters, depositions, and edited transcripts, and a records of slave births, Thomas D. Warren family, Edenton, Chowan County, N.C. Note that the photocopies were apparently selected from public papers in the State Archives a number of years ago with an intent to publish. The provenance, unfortunately, was not noted. However, it is known that some were from the secretary of state's papers; others were court papers were forwarded to the General Assembly with an owner's claim for reimbursement for an executed slave and in turn the approved claim was probably forwarded to the state treasurer for payment. In the oversized manuscript box 2, there is a manuscript letter (four sides) of 2 February 1843 written by a friend of John Brown, Augustus Wattles of Ohio (abolitionist and educator), to William Smith, Michigan, alias for David, a fugitive slave who

had belonged to Presley Nelms of Anson County, North Carolina. There are three copies of published accounts, borrowed from other repositories, that are each recollections of slavery days, by three different former slaves.

Collection Arrangement

Arranged chronologically for materials described in 1980 and thereafter, for the most part, in the order received.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

State Archives of North Carolina September 2014

Access Restrictions

Available for research

Copyright Notice

Copyright is retained by the authors of these materials, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law (Title 17 US Code). Individual researchers are responsible for using these materials in conformance with copyright law as well as any donor restrictions accompanying the materials.

Acquisitions Information

Items donated, purchased, or compiled over time from a variety of sources. More recent examples include donation in 2005 of manuscript letter by John Eady Simmons, Jr., Maryville, Tenn. Purchase of a photocopy of original owned by New York Public Library, and donated by George Stevenson, Raleigh, N.C.: "Recollection of my slavery days," by William Henry Singleton [ca. 1922]; donation in 1990 by A. Bruce Pruitt of bill of sale of Aquila, aged 9, 1842; and donation in 1989 by Lynne White Velvin, Garner, N.C. of a receipt, 30 April 1844, for purchase of two slaves, Baalam and his wife, Sally.

Processing Information note

Processed by staff members over a period of time, including Ellen Z. McGrew, 1980; George Stevenson, 1990-2005; Fran Tracy-Walls, 2014.

Finding Aid by Fran Tracy-Walls, incorporating, revising, and expanding upon finding aid by Ellen Z. McGrew and work sheets by George Stevenson.

Related Materials

Related Collections

Additional information on topics found in this collection may be found in the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS) <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/BasicSearch.aspx>

Also see in other repositories: Race and Slavery Petitions Project of the Digital Library on American Slavery. University of North Carolina at Greensboro via <http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/> and Virginia Historical Society. Slave Names Project: Unknown No Longer via <http://unknownnolonger.vahistorical.org>.

Controlled Access Headings

Function(s)

- Apprentices--North Carolina

Genre(s)

- Deed of emancipation
- deeds

Geographic Name(s)

- Anson County (N.C.)
- Bertie County (N.C.)
- Caswell County (N.C.)
- Chowan County (N.C.)
- Craven County (N.C.)
- Dobbs County (N.C.)
- Edenton (N.C.)
- Edgecombe County (N.C.)
- Johnston County (N.C.)

- New Bern (N.C.)
- Pasquotank County (N.C.)
- Person County (N.C.)
- Union City (Michigan)

Personal Name(s)

- Carrow, Jordan S.
- Glass, Henry
- Hardy, Mary Mitchell
- Hester, Robert
- Nelms, Eben
- Nelms, Presley
- Parker, Matthew
- Parker, Theophilus
- Warren, Thomas D.
- Wattles, Augustus, 1807-1876
- White, Harvy
- White, Henry

Subject(s)

- Child slaves
- Freed slaves
- Marriage--North Carolina
- Slave Bill of Sale
- Slave holders--North Carolina
- Slave insurrections--North Carolina
- Slave narratives
- Slave records--Chowan County--North Carolina
- Slavery--North Carolina
- Slaves
- Slaves--Employment--North Carolina History--19th century

Other Finding Aids note

See additional slave records, including PC.2000, Slave Bill of Sale of Jim, A Boy, Mecklenburg County, 1847; PC.2094, Slave Receipts/Bills of Sale for Catey and Children and Cloey [Chloe], A Girl.

Collection Inventory

	Box-folder
Bill of sale of slave, Sarah [Price and Tull] and three children, April 16, 1798	PC.1629.1/ folder 1
Robert White, sheriff of Dobbs County, to John Tull of Dobbs County for slave Sarah and three children (Toney, Cato, Gideon) to satisfy a court fine for their master John Rice, late of Dobbs County. 100 pounds 1 shilling. [Photocopy]	
Bill of sale of mulatto slave girl, Silvia [Hester and Crisp], March 30, 1813	PC.1629.1/ folder 2
Robert Hester of Person County to John Crisp of Caswell County for mulatto slave girl, Silvia, 4 years old. \$100.00.	
Deed of gift for mulatto slave girl Clary [Perkins, King], Ocotber 11, 1814	PC.1629.1/ folder 3
Deed of gift [lifetime]. Jesse Perkins, Sr. of Caswell County to daughter Rachel King, widow of Caswell County, for mulatto slave girl Clary, about 10 years old, and her increase. Clary and increase to be equally divided on Rachel's death between her three children Nancy, Sealy, and Samuel.	
"Permission" to marry, slave James [Ezell], July 24, 1825	PC. 1629.1/ folder 4
William Ezell Sr. advises Col. E. Peete that his slave, James, who wishes to marry one of Peete's slaves is "as well disposed as common." No county given.	
Bill of sale, slave, Betty [Cotten, Parker], January 13, 1829	PC. 1629.1/ folder 5

Spencer D. Cotten of Edgecombe County to Theophilus Parker of Edgecombe County for slave, Betty. \$239.00. Betty was acquired by deed from the Joseph Bell plantation.

Bill of sale, slave, Toney [Carrow, Clark], June 15, 1830

PC.1629.1/
folder 6

Jordan S. Carrow of Newbern, Craven County, to Elijah Clark of Bewbern for slave, Toney. \$376.00.

Bill of Sale, slave girl, Aquila [Boylan, Elliot], April 11, 1842

PC.1629.1/
folder 6a

Acquisitions Information

Gift, A. Bruce Pruitt, Whitakers, N.C., 1990.

William Boylan, sale of negro girl, Aquila, aged nine years old to Alexander Elliot. Cumberland County Court of Pleas and Quarter Session. \$250.

Bill of sale, slave, Harvy [White], February 27, 1854

PC.1629.1/
folder 7

Henry White of Pasquotank County to Daniel C. White of Pasquotank County for slave, Harvy. \$390.00

Deed of gift, slave girl, Rachel [Orrell, Hardy], June 11, 1854

PC. 1629.1/
folder 8

Mildred E. Orrell of Brunswick County to niece Mary Mitchell Hardy for slave Rachel, ca. 10 years old. Deed registered in Bertie County.

Deed of gift, slave girl, Louize [Glass], January 18, 1856

PC. 1629.1/
folder 9

Henry Glass to son Iverson M. Glass, both of Caswell County, for slave, Louize, ca. 7 years old. \$1.00.

Court Record, Craven County [photocopy], 1748	PC.1629.1/ folder 10
Cato, slave of Roger Moore, charged with stealing a hog. Found guilty and sentenced to having ears cropped and forty lashes. To be jailed until fees paid.	
Claim for Coroner's Fees [photocopy], 1768	PC.1629.1/ folder 11
John Rice's claim for inquisitions on the bodies of Court Lawrence, David Murphy, a Williams, Philip Hill, William Ashburn, and Mathew Hyde, August 23, 1764 -August 7, 1767.	
Apprentice Bond, Perquimans County [photocopy], 1770	PC.1629.1/ folder 12
Rachal Overton apprentices Lamuel Overton, a poor child of the county, to Charles Blount for eight years.	
Claim for Coroner's Fee [photocopy], 1771	PC.1629.1/ folder 13
Thomas Sitgreaves, Craven County. For holding inquisitions on the bodies of James and of Samuel Pendextor. Also claim for wages as captain of the prison guard, Jan. 16-Feb.8, [1771]. [Endorsed by Jacob Blount, J.P.]	
Court Record, Dobbs County [photocopy], 1772	PC.1629.1/ folder 14
Deposition of Mrs. Sarah Wiggins, daughter of Benjamin Herring on trial for the murder of her mulatto son. Attests that one of her father's slaves doped her with rum and seduced her several times. [See SECRETARY OF STATE PAPERS, Court Records, SS 312]	
Court Record, Brunswick County [photocopy], 1778	PC.1629.1/ folder 15

Jamey, slave of Mrs. Sarah DuPre, charged with being one of the principal murderers of Henry Williams of Lockwood Folly. Jamey valued at 80 pounds, found guilty, and sentenced to be burned at stake. (Master petitioned General Assembly for reimbursement of value of slave.)

Certification, Edenton District [photocopy], 1783

PC.1629.1/
folder 16

as Free Negro by Notary Public, Edenton District. Lemuel Overton, described as a 20-year old mulatto of middle stature, a free man, whose status has been witnessed by William Sharpe, Member of Continental Congress, Rowan County, 1779-1781.

Court Record, Halifax County [photocopy], 1785

PC.1629.1/
folder 17

Peter, slave of Moore Knight, charged with murder of John Miller and Sarah Gold. Peter valued at 127 pounds, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged, his head severed and stuck on a pole near the gallows, his body burned. (Master petitioned General Assembly for reimbursement of value of slave.)

Court Record, Halifax County [photocopy], 1786

PC.1629.1/
folder 18

Sam, slave of John Lindsey, charged with poisoning a slave woman belonging to William Jackson. Sam valued at 100 pounds, found guilty, and sentenced to hang. (Master petitioned General Assembly for reimbursement of value of slave.).

Deed of Emancipation, Craven County [photocopy], 1795

PC.1629.1/
folder 19

Alexander and Lydia Stewart of Newbern to mulatto John, alias John Stanly, for meritorious service. Authority for deed granted by license of the county court.

Letter of Petition [photocopy], 1795

PC.1629.1/
folder 20

From P. Manyeon, deputy agent of the French Republic, Wilmington, N.C., to Benjamin Smith, General Assembly, Raleigh, December 2, 1795. Requests legislature permit the debarking of 9-10 French political refugee families from Jamaica, West Indies, with their 30-40 slaves. Citizens of Wilmington protesting against entry of the slaves.

Deed of sale, New Hanover County [photocopy], 1796

PC.1629.1/
folder 21

Isabella Chapman to Amelia Green for 100 pounds Amelia's daughter Princess. Amelia Green had bought herself from Robert Schaw of Brunswick County; Isabella Chapman inherited Princess from Schaw. [In 1801, Amelia Green petitioned the Craven County court for the emancipation of her daughter Nancy.]

Commitment, Rowan County [photocopy], 1796

PC.1629.1/
folder 22

John King, accused of beating and abusing a male slave belonging to Conrad Brem, to remain in jail until bond is furnished for his court appearance.

Slave Conspiracy, Bertie County, primarily, [photocopy], 1802

PC.1629.1/
folder 23

Contains eight items. June 6, 1802. John Folk [Bertie County] to General William Williams, Martin County. Received from Capt. Geo. West enclosed examination of people at Coler[ain], Bertie County, an old letter found in Virginia, and another [letter] found at Colerain. Fears it is serious. Suggests Williams warn people in Martin County of possible insurrection and send copies of enclosures to General Carney in Halifax County. Bertie County will be in arms by 12 Wednesday. Slaves that have been examined are to be tried on Wednesday at Winton [Hertford County]. Expects that most of them will be hanged. Enclosure: Letter from J.L.C. [Virginia], n.d. Slaves have met in great numbers and great secrecy (only one of a family knows about the plan); only betrayal will prevent success. Comments on non-slaveholding whites, possible conflagration, and teaching the white tyrants a lesson. Enclosure: Examination of David Turner's Isaac, Mr. Fitt's Fred, and Mrs. Hunter's Simon [Bertie County], n.d. Re letter found on Bertie farm of Miles Raynor near Colerain. Note: See copy of the "Colerain Letter" in Bertie County Records, Miscellaneous (Slave Records). June 5 [?], 1802. General William Williams, [Martin County], to General Stephen

Carney, Halifax County. Encloses copies of truly alarming letters received this day. Militia to be raised by Wednesday. Requests he forward any information. June 9th and 11th, 1802. Examination of several slaves taken at Windsor, Bertie County. Depositions of Samuel Johnston's Sam, T. E[dward] Hare's Arthur, Lennox's Bob, and D.Turner estate's Emanuel. June 15, 1802. Confession of Dennis, property of Thomas Fitts, Bertie County. June 20, 1802. From Daniel Young, Windsor, Bertie County; to General Stephen Carney, Halifax County. Remaining depositions of slaves examined at Plymouth, Washington County. Depositions #10 (Dick Blacksmith) through #22 Mr. Slade's Lewis). undated: From Charles W. Harris, [?], to General William R. Davie, Halifax County. Testimony of Boston, Caesar, Simon, Abraham, etc.at trials of State vs. Salem (guilty), Tom (guilty), and Hampton (not guilty).

Deposition, York District, S.C. [photocopy], 1804

PC.1629.1/
folder 24

Mary Craig states that in 1801 a James Murrell came to her house and sold her a yellow boy named Mike, ca. 5-6 years old, who died a few months later of fever, swelling, and sores.

Letter from Thos. and Hezekiah Thompson of [Bertie] County [photocopy], 1816

PC. 1629.1/
folder 25

To Slade [Senator Jeremiah Slade, Martin County], who has been asked by Willis, a slave who has bought himself at an estate sale, to present his petition for emancipation to the General Assembly. The Thompson's endorse Willis's request, noting that their father had once owned him.

Character references for Admiral Dunstan [photocopy], 1833

PC. 1629.1/
folder 26

Dunstan a free Negro born in Mecklenburg County, [Va.], who wishes to reside in North Carolina. Also instructions that he must enter \$200 bond with two securities to insure his good behavior and his never being chargeable to any county in North Carolina. Bond payable to the state to be deposited with the clerk of court. [2 items]

Petition to General Assembly [photocopy], 1836

PC. 1629.1/
folder 27

Legatee of Isaac Knight of Rowan County petition for a manumission for meritorious service of slave Moreah and her daughter Susan, in accordance with a deathbed promise made to Knight, 1834. Also similar petition with signatures of D. F. Caldwell, R.M. Pearson, Burton Craige, etal. [2 items]

Receipt [original] for sale of slaves, Baalam and wife, Sally [Elliot, Williams], April 30, 1844

PC. 1629.1/
folder 28

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Lynne White Belvin, Garner, N.C., 15 June 1989.

Received of Alexander Elliot, by Joel Williams Jr. \$350, for two slaves, husband and wife. County not named.

Letter of petition from William Roberts, Buffalo [Cleveland County] [photocopy], 1850

PC. 1629.1/
folder 29

William Roberts, executor of estate of his father, Col. John Roberts, writing to John Gray Bynum, [General Assembly], Raleigh, November 26, 1850. Petition for emancipation of Walter, a 35-year old mulatto, whose master extracted a deathbed promise from his children that Walter would be freed. Three sons-in-law refused to relinquish their share in Walter, who then bought their share of himself. [Freedom not granted according to a penciled endorsement on the document.] [2 items]

Slave births, Thomas D. Warren family, Edenton, Chowan Co, N.C. [photocopy, 3 pages], 1779-1824

PC.1629.1/
folder 30

Photocopy made in 1988 is difficult to read. There are numerous entries, all of which include the name the child, mother and father, and birth date. Following many names is the entry "dead," but there is no indication when the death occurred. The following is a small sample of entries: Will Negro Boy Son of Frank & Cherry was born January 19th, 1785; Lucy Negro Girl Daughter of Frank & Cherry was born October the 20th, 1789; Merick Son of Frank and Cherry was Born February the 8th 1793; Lettie Negro Girl Daughter of Sam & Claricy [?]

was Born April the 1st day 1793; Jesse Son of George and Press [?] was born June the 20th 1797; Ishmael [?] Son of Dave and Hannah was Born August the 25 1798; Venus Daughter of George & Treaner [?] was born April the 24 1799; Lada [?] Daughter of Prince & Poll was Born the 7th of May 1799; Selah [?] Daughter of George and Press was born December the 27th 1799; Robin Son of Jim & Treaner was Born the 6 day of March 1802; Lewis Son of George and Press was Born March the 12 day of 1802; Harry Son of Pegg and Harry was Born April the 5th 1806; Harriott Daughter of Treanor and Jim was Born November the 15 1806; Mary Daughter of Poll and Robin was Born February the 16 1807; Isaac Son of Harry and Pegg was Born September the 4 1808; Isaac Son of Aggy & Joe was Born January 20th 1811; Ferebee Daughter of Aggy & Joe was Born December 5th 1812; Mingo (Alias Bonaparte) Son of Rose & George was Born November 2nd 1812; John (alias Tabarau [?]) Son of Rose & George was Born May 15th 1814; Gilbert, Son of Dave & Anny was born September 11th 1814 Jacob, Son of Joe & Aggy was born May 1815; Willis, Son of Dave & Anny was Born the 28th December 1815; Stephen, Son of George & Rose was born January 2nd 1819; Washington, Son of Joe & Aggy was Born January 25th 1821; Dem[os?], Son of Dick & Ginny was Born January 31 1822; Rachael Daughter of George & Rose was Born Sept. 21st 1822; Pathinia, Daughter of Anny was born April 1821; Laura, Daughter of Joe & Aggy was born Nov. 22 1822; Atlas, Son of Dick & Ginny was born March 21, 1823; George, Son of George & Rose was born Sept. 9, 1824; Tom, Son of Joe & Aggy was born Oct. 11, 1824

Hire of Slaves of Matthew Parker dec'd [original] [Johnston Co, N.C.], January 4, 1862

PC.1629.1/
folder 31

Account and condition of the hire of the Negroes and rents of land belonging to the heirs of Matthew Parker by administrator, Jesse Parker, January 4, 1862. [Also notation of rents of lands belonging to Eliza Gerald heir of Isaac Gerald by guardian, Jesse Parker, Jan. 4, 1862.] 2 pages. Names of workers hired include Isaac (man), Judy, Becca (both women), Haywood and Quinny (both boys). The document specifies the type of clothing and supplies for each.

Letter [manuscript] Augustus Wattles, Mercer Co., Ohio, to William Smith, Union City, Mich., Feb. 2, 1843

PC.1629.2
(oversized)/
folder 32

Acquisitions Information

Gift, John Eady Simmons, Jr., Maryville, Tenn., 2005

Letter was written by the friend of John Brown and abolitionist and educator, Augustus Wattles of Mercer County, Ohio to "William Smith" of Union City, Michigan. "Smith" was a fugitive slave who had belonged to Presley Nelms of Anson County, North Carolina. In his last will and testament, Nelms stipulated that his blacksmith slave, David, David's wife Lucy, all their children, and all the children of their daughter, Charlotte, be emancipated. The emancipation clause of the will was not put into execution by the testator's son and executor, Eben Nelms. In a surprisingly short time after it became clear that the executor had no intention of proceeding with the emancipation, but intended holding the family in slavery. David, the blacksmith managed to flee from Anson County to Mercer County, Ohio. Here he found relief and assistance from Augustus Wattles and took the alias, "William Smith". Shortly thereafter, David's son Andrew, too, managed to escape from Union County into the free states.

This letter from Wattles to David, alias William Smith, includes the text of three letters that Wattles had received from North Carolina on the subject of David and his fugitive son Andrew. It offers astute advice to David on how best to protect himself, his money, and his son, from what might prove to be double-dealing from professed friends in North Carolina.

Box

Singleton, William Henry, Recollection of my slavery days, no pub. [ca. 1922]

PC.1629.2
(oversized)

Acquisitions Information

Xerographic copy of original owned by New York Public Library, purchased and given by George Stevenson.

Published in New York. 10 pages. The adventures of Singleton from about 1850 to 1866, a young slave belonging to a Nelson family of Adams Creek, Craven County, who went with his master's nephew to war, but who escaped from the CSA army to federally occupied New Bern where he enlisted in the U.S. army in 1863.

Allen, Parker, Recollections of slavery times, 1895.

PC.1629.2
(oversized)

Acquisitions Information

Electrostatic copy made from microfilm of original imprint owned by another repository and borrowed for the purpose of filming and copying.

Published Worcester, Mass.: Chas. W. Burbank and Co., 1895. [7-96]p. t.p. and p.1-6 apparently lacking. Extensive and highly detailed account of slave life in rural, northern Chowan County from the mid-1830s to the Civil War. (Author made his escape to federal lines in 1862.)

Robinson, William H., From log cabin to the pulpit; or, Fifteen years in slavery, undated, but circa 1904

PC.1629.2
(oversized)

No place of publication included. 127p. illus., ports. Lacking pages 115-116, 119-120. Account of the life and times from about 1858 to about 1878 of a freedman formerly belonging to the Cowen/Cowan family of New Hanover County. Recounts incidents from his life and his treatment as a slave, his efforts at escape, his Civil War experiences in both the C.S.A. and U.S.A. armies, his education and employments in the post-war years (including a tour in London), and his religious conversion and entry into the Methodist ministry.

Acquisitions Information

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